



Massachusetts Premier Soccer Youth Development Academy

U8 Coaching Manual 2010



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U8 Coaching Guidelines

Aim:

To allow players to develop in a **SAFE, FUN** and **EDUCATIONAL** environment.

Objectives:

- 1.) Keep things brief and simple! Remember players at this level have a very short attention span. Be careful with the language you use when communicating with young players – always be as positive as possible and include all players.
- 2.) Make things FUN! Your energy and enthusiasm need to come through in every practice. Allow players as much active time with a ball each as possible.
- 3.) Use your imagination! A successful coach with this age range is one who can make his/her session relate to how the young player views the world.
- 4.) **ALL** players should be given plenty of opportunities to succeed and **ALL** players need to be kept motivated and challenged. Come down to their level and be part of their world.

To succeed in coaching players in this age range, you must have:

- **Patience** – they will not understand things right away. Although young they want and need you to be in charge. Be firm with what your expectations are but remember you are dealing with young children;
- **Flexibility** – recognize when something is not working and change it;
- **A sense of humor** – laugh with your players;
- **A very positive attitude** – give generous praise often;
- **And lots and lots of energy.**



Training Session Breakdown

1.) WARM-UP

10mins

Begin with a **FUN** activity. This should prepare the players mentally and physically for the rest of the practice.

2.) TECHNICAL EXERCISES

30mins

Use two technical exercises to promote handling the ball with both feet. These games are designed to be high energy, fun activities that reinforce the basic techniques.

3.) SMALL-SIDED GAMES

30mins

Each practice should conclude with a small-sided game.

The size of the field should be about 40 x 30 and the teams should be 4v4 with a keeper/sweeper.

4.) COOL DOWN

5mins

Spend five minutes at the end of each session making sure that all of your players enjoyed themselves. Do a fun cool down, reinforce basic technical points, have a group huddle and say goodbye.



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Small-sided Games – 4v4

Every practice should conclude with a small-sided game. Remember that the game is the best teacher of all. Your main aim is to create a **SAFE, FUN, EDUCATIONAL** environment in which your players can develop. This should be the largest portion of your practice – about thirty minutes in length.

Organization

- 1.) Field Size: 40x30yds
- 2.) Play with a keeper/sweeper who may use both hands and feet. Encourage this player to be an active part of the game.
- 3.) Do not over-emphasize positional play.
- 4.) Equipment: Use cones to clearly mark out the area of the field.
- 5.) Use upright cones or flags as goals and place them about 6 feet apart.
- 6.) Use pinneys to avoid confusion amongst players.
- 7.) Play with a SIZE 3 ball.
- 8.) Be flexible with your playing time– your main aim is that all players have a positive experience. You can vary the playing periods and make sure to allow time for substitutions and water breaks.
- 9.) Use the parents – have the parents stand around the perimeter of the field and stop the ball.
 - 4v4 will promote players touching the ball and being involved as much as possible.
 - Keep instructions clear and to a minimum and use your enthusiasm to keep all players motivated.
 - Give the teams names and generate excitement without putting emphasis on outcome.
 - Always stress the importance of fair play and sportsmanship and have the players shake hands/high five at the end of each game.

By the end of your session make sure that all your players have achieved some measure of success. Call the team in for a group huddle to say goodbye.



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COACHING GUIDELINES

There are four main pillars of soccer, which are evident at every level of the game – **TECHNICAL, TACTICAL, PHYSICAL and PSYCHOLOGICAL.**

Clearly there will be different emphasis placed on each one depending on the age and ability of the player.

It is important that a coach has clear goals for himself/herself and for his/her team prior to working with any age group.

1.) Technical

At this age we should be emphasizing that players use both feet as much as possible. We want to continue the process of getting them to be comfortable with the ball at either foot.

Scheme of work	-	8-week program
Weeks 1-5	-	Dribbling
Weeks 6-7	-	Passing
Week 8	-	Shooting

2.) Tactical

- Basic principles of attack/defense. When attacking we want field to be as big as possible and when defending we want it as small as possible.
- There should be no emphasis on playing set positions at this age range.
- The rules of the game should not take over the game. Restarts should be done quickly with players encouraged to get the ball in play quickly with their feet.

3.) Psychological

- The main psychological goal for players at this stage of their development is to have **FUN.**
- Coaches need to ensure that their players receive an exciting and positive introduction to the game of soccer to ensure future participation.
- There should be absolutely no emphasis placed on winning games.



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4.) Physical

- Players at this age find it fun to be active. Keep them moving with a ball as much as possible.
- Any fitness that they receive should be as a result of playing the game of soccer. Use soccer games to improve balance and coordination.

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Age Group: U8 – Smart Soccer

Theme of Session: Dribbling - Pirates of the Caribbean – Week 1.

<u>TIME</u>	<u>ORGANIZATION</u>	<u>COACHING POINTS</u>
10 minutes	<p><u>Pirate Island –</u> The players all dribble within Soccer Island, 30x20 yard area. When the coach (Jack Sparrow) calls out a part of the body, players need to stop the ball and put that part of the body onto the ball e.g. foot, knee, nose etc. You can make this competitive - 1st player to put the body part on the ball earns a point. Start off with one body part then you can add in two, three, four parts at the same time.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small touches on the ball • Have players look for the biggest space to control the ball in – heads up!
15 minutes	<p><u>Sailing the 7 seas –</u> The coach introduces the players to three different ships. The 1st pirate ship is the Jolly Roger (slow ship), 2nd ship is the Sloop (medium ship) and the 3rd ship is the Black Pearl (fast ship). There are three speeds that the players need to work at and the coach should continue to change the working speeds. Introduce the Drag back move to change direction if Davy Jones comes to chase them!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call the ball the ‘ships wheel’ and all pirates want to keep the wheel close to them • Drag back – place the sole of the foot on the ball, drag the ball back behind you, turn to follow the ball
15 minutes	<p><u>Black Pearl Plunge –</u> Half of the players with a ball and half without. The players without (Crew of the Black Pearl) are trying to plunge the ship by putting his/her foot on top of a player’s ball. The plunger the ship and the players must do 20 toe taps to bring the ship to the surface. The game ends when the Black Pearl Pirates plunge all ships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head Up and change of speeds to get away from taggers. Introduce a little shielding
30 minutes	<p><u>Will Scarlet’s Crew vs. Davy Jones’ Crew –</u> Play in 40x30 with a GK/Sweeper. Only one player should be allowed to use their hands BUT encourage them to play in a more forward role as a sweeper. Have a supply of balls at the side to keep the game flowing, and to try and limit stoppages</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fun, Fun, Fun • Reduce stoppages by having balls on hand and encourage lots of dribbling and moves. • Head Up, Awareness.
5 minutes	<p><u>Cool Down – Follow the leader.</u> Bring all the players in and discuss the session on what they learnt. Finish off with a big group Pirates Cheer.</p>	

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Age Group: U8 – Smart Soccer

Theme of Session: Dribbling - Lucky Numbers – Week 2.

<u>TIME</u>	<u>ORGANIZATION</u>	<u>COACHING POINTS</u>
10 minutes	<p>Number Cruncher – Players all dribble around in a 20x20 area. On the Coaches command of ‘Kick out’ the coach goes into the square and attempts to kick out all of the players balls from the square. Once your ball has been kicked out of the square you become a catcher as well. The last person in the square with their ball is the winner and starts the next game as the catcher. Progression to only use one foot to dribble.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can they use the Drag back to avoid having their ball kicked out • Keep the ball close
15 minutes	<p>9 Lives – All players have a ball and start off with 9 Lives. They will lose two of those Lives if they are dribbling too slowly, collide with someone else or go outside of the 20 x20 square. They must attempt to perform a turn or move every five touches. Progression is to introduce the Inside Cut and Outside Cut. The Coach can also deduct a point if when he freezes the game the players are able to touch each other. Reward players by giving them Lives if they work hard, do a move well, or are in the biggest space when you freeze the game.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inside Cut – place the non-kicking foot by the side of the ball, pivot on the non-kicking foot, until facing the other way, use the inside of the foot to take the ball away
15 minutes	<p>The Lottery – Players are moving around inside the 30 x 25 yard area, and when the Coach calls out a number they have 5 seconds to get into a group of that number. If they are not in a group of that number by the time the Coach gets to zero then those players have to do a FUN activity. Ensure the players are still trying to complete a turn or move every five touches. Progression: Add other fun actions such as piggy-backs or lying on their backs/stomachs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outside Cut – Place the non-kicking foot away from the ball, with the kicking foot flick the ball in the opposite direction with the outside of the foot, pivot is on the kicking foot.
30 minutes	<p>4 v 4 – Play in 40 x 30 area with a GK/Sweeper. Only one player should be allowed to use their hands BUT encourage them to play in a more forward role as a sweeper. Have a supply of balls at the side to keep the game flowing, and to try and limit stoppages</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage width and length by explaining the diamond shape.
5 minute	<p>Cool Down – Follow the leader Have a question and answer session with the players about the day’s session and then finish off with a group huddle.</p>	

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Age Group: U8 – Smart Soccer

Theme of Session: Dribbling Animania – Week 3.

<u>TIME</u>	<u>ORGANIZATION</u>	<u>COACHING POINTS</u>
10 minutes	<p><u>Follow the leader -</u> Players work in pairs with a ball each. Begin with players walking and progress to jogging and eventually going as quick as possible. On coach’s command of ‘change’ they reverse positions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light touches, keeping the ball under control • Dribble with their head up
15 minutes	<p><u>Lion King –</u> Each player has a ball and also a pinney. The pinney is used as a tail and is tucked into the back of the player’s shorts. Players are lions with a tail. On the Coaches command the game begins and all players are allowed to steal any other player’s pinney/tail. Once the tail has been stolen they must then put it in beside there other tail. At the end of the game the winner is the lion with the most tails in the back of their shorts – the Lion King. They may only steal a tail if they have control of their soccer ball. If a player loses their tail, they can still word hard to get one back – play for two minutes at a time. Progression: use one foot only to dribble, if player performs turns they are safe for 3 seconds...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head up to look for tails to steal and to stop your tail being stolen • Soft touches on the ball
15 minutes	<p><u>Dog Catcher –</u> With a partner and a ball each. Name the players e.g. Dog and Dog Catcher. On the Coaches command the first player dribbles and on his second command the second player dribbles and their job is to try and catch their partner and stay beside them. When the Coach freezes the game, if player No.2 can touch their partner then they win a point, if they can’t touch them then their partner wins the point. Change positions. After five games, change partners – keep your record. Progression: use specific turns each go, only use one foot when dribbling.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Running at pace with the ball under control • Head up to find and follow partner • Use moves/turns to change direction and lose your partner
30 minutes	<p><u>4 v 4 -</u> Small sided game with a goalkeeper/sweeper. Have a supply of balls to limit the stoppages.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A successful turn or move gains your team an extra goal.
5 minutes	<p><u>Cool Down – Follow the leader.</u> Bring all the players in and discuss the session on what they learnt. Finish off with a big group huddle.</p>	

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Age Group: U8 – Smart Soccer

Theme of Session: Dribbling – Harry Potter - Week 4.

<u>TIME</u>	<u>ORGANIZATION</u>	<u>COACHING POINTS</u>
10 minutes	<p><u>Flying lessons -</u> All 1st years at Hogwarts must learn to ride their soccer broom around the castle grounds. The coach will introduce 3 speeds.</p> <p>Old Broom speed –slow and careful Weasley Speed – a little quicker with lots of touches Nimbus 2000 speed – as fast as you can go</p> <p>Introduce Left Turns, Right Turns, and Magic Spins (Cruyff Turns) Award magic stars for players that are flying well and are able to turn, stop and change speed on Coach Potters command.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep the ball close • Head Up • Lots of touches • Cruyff Turn – Place the non-kicking foot at the side of the ball, the kicking foot is placed at 90 degrees to the non-kicking foot, using the inside of the kicking foot to push the ball back in the opposite direction, pivot on the non-kicking foot.
15 minutes	<p><u>Freeze Attack -</u> The Slytherins led by Malfoy, attack the Gryffindors and attempt to use a freeze spell on them while they practice their flying. This is done by placing their foot on top of a ball. If frozen the Gryffindors must perform a melting charm to escape. Half the players are Slytherins (without a ball) and half are Gryffindors (with a ball). Change after 3 mins and make into a competition. Winning team gets 5 magic stars per player. The melting Charm is 5 juggles and 2 Magic Spins.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head Up/Awareness • Change speed to escape the Freeze Spell • Keep the ball close to the body with small touches to avoid an easy tag.
15 minutes	<p><u>Hogwarts Challenge -</u> The four houses of Hogwarts are represented by four square bases in the corners of the field (5x5 Square). All of the Balls are placed in the middle of the area. Players must run into the centre and perform a Magic Spin to snag a ball back to their base. Once all the balls are gone from the middle players are permitted to “perform a steal charm and take a ball from another house base. The house with the most balls at the end wins the challenge and 5 magic stars per player.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must perform correct ‘snag’ technique • Cannot guard base • Cannot take more than one ball
30 minutes	<p><u>4 v 4</u> – Inside an area 40 x 30 yards.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A successful turn or move gains your team an extra goal
5 minutes	<p><u>Cool Down</u> – Team Jog Have a question and answer session with the players.</p>	

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Age Group: U8 – Smart Soccer

Theme of Session: Dribbling -Shrek - Week 5.

<u>TIME</u>	<u>ORGANIZATION</u>	<u>COACHING POINTS</u>
10 minutes	<p><u>Ogre Swamp -</u> Mini Ogres have to plant mushroom seeds all over the forest by rolling their mushroom ball over every part of the area. When coach shouts "I'm an Ogre" the minis must plant the seeds by performing</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inside Taps 2. Toe Taps 3. Flick Ball up (dig up/pack the dirt) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep head up at all time • Look for space when running • Keep ball close when dribbling • Quick Footwork
15 minutes	<p><u>Donkey Gates -</u> Shrek is training for the Farquad Grand Prix so Donkey has placed gates around the forest (2yds apart) and the players are split into two teams (Donkeys v Ogres) Each player has a ball and begins at a gate. Race One – Players have to dribble through as many gates as possible in 60 secs Race Two – Players have to go through the gates sideways Race Three – Backwards</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balance and control • Different surfaces to achieve success • Change of speed
15 minutes	<p><u>Lord Farquad's Grand Prix -</u> Same set-up as above but now Shrek will play a 1v1 vs. Lord Farquad to see who can get through as many gates. Play three races (x60 seconds) with a skill challenge in between to allow players to recover - i.e. juggling. Pairs will begin at a gate with 1 ball between two. Players must compete for the ball and then get through as many gates as possible.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strength on ball • Attitude to win the ball • Technique under pressure
30 minutes	<p><u>4 v 4</u> – Inside an area 40 x 30 yards.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A successful turn or move gains your team an extra goal.
5 minutes	<p><u>Cool Down – Team Jog</u> Have a question and answer session with the players about the day's session and then finish off with a group Ogre Cheer.</p>	

EVALUATION:



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Age Group: U8 – Smart Soccer

Theme of Session: Passing- Sea World – Week 6.

<u>TIME</u>	<u>ORGANIZATION</u>	<u>COACHING POINTS</u>
10 minutes	<p><u>The Seal Show</u> – In 2's, passing and moving freely around the sea. When the Coach (seal trainer) calls out a number the players (seals) need to play that amount of passes between themselves while making seal noises. Progression: It is a race and you are looking for the first team to complete that number of passes. Three touch/Two Touch/One Touch</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small, accurate passes needed • Play with Inside of your foot
15 minutes	<p><u>Going Fishing -</u> Players are in twos around 10 yards apart. . Each player has a goal 1 yard wide which there partner has to try and pass the ball through; they <u>cannot</u> stop the ball from going through the goal. Progression 1. Player receives the ball and touches to the side before passing back through opponent's gate. At the end of the game have the player with the most 'bites' (goals) move on to play another winner. 2. Change feet where applicable</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pass with the side of the foot • Use a locked ankle • Follow through in the direction of the pass • First touch out away from body setting up inside pass
15 minutes	<p><u>Sharks and Sailors -</u> Sharks have each stolen 3 fish from the sailors, (three cones are held by each shark) The shark will dribble around holding 3 fish. The sailor can make a shark drop a fish by playing an accurate pass (inside foot) against the shark's ball. The aim is to get the Sharks to drop as many fish as possible inside 2 minutes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have the non-kicking foot pointing in the direction of the pass • Weight and timing
30 minutes	<p><u>4 v 4</u> – Inside an area 40 x 30 yards with goals three yards wide.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must make two passes before they can score • Four complete passes also counts as a goal
5 minutes	<p><u>Cool Down – Team Jog</u> Bring the players in and have a question and answer session on the things learnt during the session and set their homework for the next week. Finish off with a group huddle.</p>	

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Age Group: U8 – Smart Soccer

Theme of Session: Passing - Chronicles of Narnia – Week 7.

<u>TIME</u>	<u>ORGANIZATION</u>	<u>COACHING POINTS</u>
10 minutes	<p><u>Ice Monsters -</u> Players are dribbling around in a 20x20 grid in Narnia. The White Witch has sent ice monsters to freeze you into a statue. If the ice monster touches your ball with his her feet or hands you are frozen (stand with ball in hands with legs open) Player can be defrosted by a pair of players passing the ball through your legs using the inside of the foot. Game lasts about 2 minutes. Rotate ice monsters</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep the ball close to them with small touches • Head up to avoid the Ice Monsters • Side of the foot pass through the legs
15 minutes	<p><u>Lions v Witches</u> In a 20x20 grid each players has a ball. The teams are divided into Aslan’s Lions and White Witches.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lions must play their ball successfully against a witch’s ball to send the witch to the ice palace (one side of the grid) • Witches must do the same to send the lions back to the Wardrobe (other side of grid) <p>Both sets of players can come back into the game when they perform 10 short passes with a team-mate. Player must juggle until a team-mate arrives.</p> <p>Progression 1. Use outside of foot</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurate passes – non-kicking foot pointing in the direction of the pass • Weight and timing of pass as target is moving. • Strike through the center of the ball • Head Up/Awareness • Accuracy of pass
15 minutes	<p><u>Rescue Team</u> As above but instead of going to the outside when ball is struck the players must remain with ball at feet frozen. They can only be rescued by a good beaver or evil gnome who must enter Narnia (with a ball) and tap each frozen witch or lion 5 times on the head. They must then retreat back to the safe zone (Wardrobe or Palace) Game is won when the rescue team’s ball is struck by an opponent.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rescue player must come out when called by a lion or witch.
30 Minutes	<p><u>4 v 4</u> – Inside an area 40 x 30 yards with goals three yards wide.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must make two passes before they can score • Four complete passes also counts as a goal
5 minutes	<p><u>Cool Down – Team Jog</u> Bring the players in and have a question and answer session on the things learnt during the session and set their homework for the next week. Finish off with a group Aslan’s Roar.</p>	

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Age Group: U8 – Smart Soccer

Theme of Session: Shooting - Transformers – Week 8.

TIME

10
minutes

Transformer Training -

Players are in twos around 10 yards apart. Each player has a goal 1 yard wide which their partner has to try and pass the ball through; they cannot stop the ball from going through the goal. Every time they succeed with an accurate pass they score a power point which makes them a stronger and faster transformer.

Progression

1. Player receives the ball and touches to the side before passing back through opponent's gate. At the end of the game have the player with the most Change feet if applicable

15
minutes

Transformer Goal Zone -

Players are split into two groups and lined up at either side of the field facing a small goal. Each team will have 60 secs to score as many goals as possible (to save the universe by sending their plasma ball into the enemy base) Players have two touches one to control and one to shoot. They collect their ball and return to the end of the group. This should be fun and fast flowing with lots of repetition.

Progression

1. Different Feet
2. Add Goalkeepers

15
minutes

Autobots vs. Decepticons -

Players are split into two groups as above but are placed on opposite sides of the field (with goals). Each group is numbered 1-4/5. On the coach's number call both Optimus and Deceptor bots into the Transformer Arena. (Player's run through the side gate where a ball awaits. Players play 1v1 to empty goals and then return to group.

Progression

1. With GK'S
2. 2V2 based on ability

30
minutes

4 v 4 – Inside an area 40 x 30 yards with goals three yards wide.

5
minutes

Cool Down – Team Jog

Bring the players in and have a question and answer session on the things learnt during the session and set their homework for the next week. Finish off with a group Transformer Cheer.

ORGANIZATION

COACHING POINTS

- Strike the ball with the laces
- Various shooting techniques
- Accuracy
- Look to shoot early
- Various techniques
- Strike with the inside and/or Laces
- Keep your head down over the ball
- Shooting Accuracy
- Follow through the shot
- Shoot as early as possible
- Must be fast moving with lots of attempts on goal
- Encourage players to shoot early and often!!

EVALUATION: